

SENATE BILL 722

By Johnson

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 37  
and Title 49, relative to educational supports for  
foster care youth.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-4-933(b), is amended by adding the following as a new subdivision:

( ) Was, after reaching seventeen (17) years of age, placed in state custody, placed in permanent guardianship by the department of children's services, or placed for adoption by the department of children's services or one (1) of the department's adoption contract agencies.

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 7, Part 1, is amended by adding the following as a new section:

(a) The department of children's services, working jointly with the Tennessee higher education commission, the board of regents, and public institutions of higher education, shall establish a foster care youth outreach liaison pilot program at a minimum of five (5) public institutions of higher education.

(b) The purpose of the liaison is to serve as:

(1) A knowledgeable source of information for youth who are in foster care, participating in extension of foster care, or are former foster youth regarding existing resources at the higher education institution; and

(2) A point of contact between the department of children's services and the higher education institution regarding the special needs of these youth in order to increase retention and graduation among this population.

(c) The department of children's services, working jointly with the Tennessee higher education commission, the board of regents, and public institutions of higher education, shall establish the scope and duties of the liaisons in the program, including the requisite qualifications, training, or education for serving as a liaison. A liaison may be an employee of the higher education institution.

(d) The pilot program terminates on June 30, 2024. While the program is in effect, the department of children's services, working jointly with the Tennessee higher education commission, the board of regents, and public institutions of higher education, shall evaluate the success of the program and, on or before January 1, 2024, provide a recommendation to the education committees of the senate and the house of representatives regarding whether the program should be extended or expanded.

SECTION 3. This act takes effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.